Discourse Markers in High School English Textbooks in Iran

Mohammad Reza Talebinejad
Islamic Azad University, Shahr-e-Reza Branch, Iran
Email: talebinejad@iaush.ac.ir; rtalebinejad@yahoo.com

Azam Namdar
Islamic Azad University, Shahr-e-Reza Branch, Iran
Email: Anamdarz64@yahoo.com

Abstract—Discourse Markers (DMs) are affective factors to connect sentences, hence making the text coherent. The purpose of this study was to investigate the reading comprehension sections of Iranian high school English textbooks (IHSETs) to find out the extent of using DMs and their types. To this end, the reading sections in IHSETs were analyzed to determine DMs. Fraser’s (1999) category of DMs were used with 4 main classifications: a) Contrastive Markers, b) Elaborative Markers, c) Inferential Markers, and 4) Topic Change Markers. To make this investigation viable, parallel texts in internationally-developed English textbooks were compared with IHSETs in terms of the use of DMs. To insure the equality of the number of words and level of difficulty, the Flesch (1948) readability formula was used. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the frequency of DMs in the reading sections of IHETs and the authentic texts to the benefit of the authentic texts. Materials designers may find the results helpful in their work.

Index Terms—discourse markers, textbooks, reading comprehension, readability

I. INTRODUCTION

Course books are necessary tools in teaching. They can manage the process of teaching and learning. Razmjoo (2007) has considered textbook as a necessary resource for foreign language learning that has the main role in teaching and learning a foreign language. He has analyzed high school textbooks versus private institute books to see whether they are based on communicative teaching principles. His study has shown that textbooks in private institutes fulfill communicative language teaching (CLT) to a great extent whereas textbooks in high school are neither based on CLT nor fulfill language learners’ needs. Dahmardeh (2009) has analyzed 20 Iranian English teachers and an author of the textbooks’ perspectives about English materials in Iranian English textbooks. According to his research, the disadvantages of the current courses were determined as follow (Dahmardeh, 2009, p. 2):

a. Lack of coherence
b. A narrow curriculum
c. Form-based exercises
d. Lack of flexibility

He has added that the main focus in Iranian English book is on reading comprehension and presentation of reading strategies. Reading is an important skill because other skills are defined in the framework of reading. Reading is communication between reader and writer and the purpose of reading is making the meaning.

Jahangard (2007) has pointed out that listening and speaking skills are marginal activities in EFL materials in Iranian high schools. Reading skill, which seems to be the most important skill in books, is a tool to introduce grammatical points, and texts are manipulated to reinforce particular grammatical points included in the grammar section of the book. Gabb (2001) believes that reading is like watching a movie in your head. Rivers (1981) has believed that reading is the most important skill in language learning because it can represent lots of information and is a pleasurable activity, and it can also extend one’s knowledge of the language.

According to Goodman (1967), reading is a selective process. It means that comprehending a text is based on the use of available language used in the texts that are selected from perceptual input regarding what the reader expects from a text. Widdowson (1979) believes written discourse as well as spoken discourse operates in accordance with Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle. Language is used as a clue to correspondence of conceptual world in this interaction between readers and writers. He has added interpretation of written or spoken discourse needs as a kind of creativity. This creativity is done based on textual clues by the readers.

A. What Is Discourse Analysis?

Widdowson (1979) has also thought that teachers generally do not pay much attention to teaching how to relate sentences together to form stretches of connected discourse. Teachers rely on the grammarian to connect the sentences
and they consider sentences as distinct units. Louwarse and Graesser (2005, pp. 1-2) infer that, “Several years ago the term discourse was reserved for dialogue, and text was reserved for monologue. In contemporary research, discourse covers both monologic and dialogic spoken and written language.”

According to Fraser (1999), DMs are conjunctions, adverbs, and propositional phrases that link different parts of a text like sentences and phrases together. Redeker (1991, p. 1168) calls them discourse operators and defines them as a “word or phrase, for instance, a conjunction, adverbial, comment clause, interjection that is uttered with the primary function of bringing to listeners’ attention a particular kind of the upcoming utterance with the immediate discourse context.” Mingliang and Dayon (2007) have also mentioned that students will know what and how to read and reading will be simplified if they know about textual functional DMs. So, students distinguish more important sentences, and in this way, their speed in reading will increase.

B. Fraser’s Discourse Markers

Fraser (1999) has claimed that DMs have been studied under various labels like, discourse markers, discourse connectives, discourse operators, pragmatic connectives, sentence connectives, and cue phrases. Fraser (1999, p. 931) defines DMs “as a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and propositional phrases.”

He has also believed that DMs represent a relationship between the interpretations of a segment that is known as S2 and the previous one, S1. He has shown the canonical form as <S1. DM+ S2>. DMs in Fraser’s classification have been viewed as procedural meaning, and their linguistic and conceptual interpretation is ‘negotiated’ by the context. Fraser (1999) introduces two kinds of DMs. The first group relates to some aspects of S2 to S1 explicitly, and the second group relates the topic of S1 to S2. According to him, there are some important issues about DMs.

DMs relate some aspects of the message in S2 and S1. The first class in Fraser’s category is Contrastive Markers. These kinds of DMs show that interpretation of S2 contrasts with an interpretation of S1. Consider this sentence that contains DMs:

- John weighs 150 pounds. In comparison, Jim weighs 155.

In this sentence, in comparison indicates that S2 is in contrast with S1. According to meaning, this subclass can be divided as (Fraser, 1999, p. 947):

- a. but
- b. however, (al)though
- c. in contrast (with/ to this/ that), whereas
- d. in comparison (with/ to this/ that)
- e. on the contrary; contrary to this/ that
- f. conversely
- g. Instead (of (doing) this/ that, in spite of (doing) this/ that, nevertheless, nonetheless, still)

The second subclass is called Elaborative Markers. DMs relate messages in S2 to S1. “In these cases, the DM signals a quasi.parallel relationship between S2 and S1” (Fraser, 1999, p. 948):

- You should be always polite. Above all, you shouldn’t belch at the table.
- They didn’t want to upset the meeting by too much talking. Similarly, we didn’t want to upset the meeting by too much drinking.

Finer distinctions include:

- a. and
- b. above all, also, besides, better yet, for another thing, furthermore, in addition, moreover, more to the point, on top of it all, too, to cap it all off, what is more
- c. I mean, in particular, namely, parenthetically, that is (to say)
- d. analogously, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, likewise, similarly
- e. be that as it may, or, otherwise, that said, well

The third class of DMs in Fraser’s is called Inferential Markers. These group of DMs shows that S2 is seen as conclusion for S1:

- The bank has been closed all day. Thus, we couldn’t make a withdrawal.
- It’s raining. Under those conditions, we should ride our bikes.

It can also be said that S1 is viewed as a reason for S2. Thus, it indicates that content of S2 is the conclusion of S1. Inferential markers can be placed in theses subclasses:

- a. so
- b. of course
- c. accordingly, as a consequence, as a logical conclusion, as a result, because of this/that, consequently, for this/that reason, hence, it can be concluded that, therefore, thus
- d. in this/ that case, under these/those conditions, then
- e. all this things considered

As mentioned before, the first main class of DMs relates some aspects of S1 and S2; they are called Contrastive Markers, Elaborative Markers, and Inferential Markers. The second main class of DMs in Fraser’s category is Topic Change Markers.
The dinner looks delicious. Incidentally where do you shop?

I am glad that it is finished. To return to my point, I’d like to discuss your paper.

In the first example, incidentally shows that S2 is a digression from the topic of S1, whereas in the other example, to return to my point indicates that the speaker intends to reintroduce the previous topic. They are:

Back to my original point, I forgot, by the way, incidentally, just to update you, on a different note, speaking of X, that reminds me, to change to topic, to return to my point, while I think of it, with regards to

C. Coherence and Cohesive Devices

Dulger (2007) has mentioned that a writer follows a coherent composition from word to sentence and from sentence to paragraph. Cohesive devices connect sentences, and Dulger mentions that a coherent text has a smooth flow in which sentences follow each other easily. He has added that readers make use of syntactic and structural relations to get the meaning of the text. In written discourse and above sentence level, besides punctuation and layout, discourse markers help writers to connect sentences to form a paragraph and paragraphs to form a text. Hussein (2006) has claimed that coherence group considers DMs as linguistic devices. He also adds that DMs cause coherence in the text by connecting different parts of a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have viewed coherence of a text as well-formed text. They also believe that cohesion is a linguistic device through the use of which we can relate units of a text so that the text becomes coherent. A text can be coherent by using co-reference, ellipsis, and conjunctions. They have also represented five categories for English cohesive devices: 1) reference, 2) substitution, 3) ellipses, 4) lexical cohesion, and 5) conjunction. Halliday and Hasan have viewed conjunction or connective element as discourse markers; they are some categories for discourse markers:

1. Additive: and, or, also, in addition, furthermore, besides, similarly, likewise, by contrast, for instance, etc.
2. Adversative: but, yet, however, instead, on the other hand, nevertheless, at any rate, as a matter of fact, etc.
3. Causal: so, consequently, it follows, for, because, under the circumstances, for this reason, etc.
4. Continuative: now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all, etc.

They have pointed out that if sentences are related semantically through the use of cohesive devices it can be known as a text. So, the terms ‘texture’ and ‘cohesion’ are extremely related together. Halliday and Hasan (1976) classified cohesion into two types: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. The most familiar group for grammatical cohesion is DMs. Hussein (2006, p. 3) has referred to some examples for DMs:

a. He has got a very good mark in the math test.
   b. And, he has been the first in his class for the last. (additive)
   c. Yet, he failed his syntax test this term. (adversative)
   d. Now, he feels very frustrated and thinks of leaving school. (temporal)

Hussein (2006, p. 3) has mentioned that lexical cohesion can be achieved through repetition or reiteration. There was a great woman, who used to look after me when I was a kid. She used to feed me, play with me, and tell me nice stories. The woman was my mother.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A number of questions such as: How are DMs used in Iranian high school English textbooks? Are such important factors taken into consideration? Are students exposed to DMs sufficiently in reading comprehension sections in English textbooks? Were addresses in this study which aimed at studying how DMs are used in Iranian high school English textbooks for the first time. It also analyzed teachers’ ideas about these books regarding using DMs, and whether students know about the influence of DMs on reading comprehension.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to what has been said so far, the following questions were raised:

1. To what extent are DMs used in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?
2. What kinds of DMs are used in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Materials

In this research study, some instruments were used with the purpose of collecting the information. One was Fraser’s (1999) category of DMs, Iranian high school English Textbooks, authentic books which were written by native speakers of English a questionnaire based on Miekley’s (2005) and Yannopoulos’s (2004) checklist which were given to the teachers. The other instrument used was Flesch (1948) readability formulas to determine the readability of the different texts.

1. Iranian High School English Textbooks (IHSETs)

All of the reading sections in IHSETs were analyzed to distinguish the DMs. There are 9 reading comprehension sections in Book 1 (Birjandi, Soheili, Nowroozi, & Mahmoodi, 2000), 7 reading comprehension sections in Book 2 (Birjandi, Nowroozi, & Mahmoodi, 2002a), 6 reading comprehension sections, in Book 3 (Birjandi, Nowroozi, &
Mahmoodi, 2002b), and 8 lessons in Book 4 (Birjandi, Ananisarab, & Samimi, 2006). Book 4 was used as a pre-university book before (by 2010), but now the system of education has changed and the pre-university cycle is called the 4th Grade.

2. Authentic Texts

To analyze the DMs in IHSETs, it was necessary to compare these texts with authentic texts. There was a traditional suppose that learners should be presented by simplified language, but nowadays it is recommended that they should deliver authentic language (Widdowson, 1979). So, 14 reading texts were selected randomly from prevalent authentic books which are taught in Iran. These books are:

2. *Start Reading 4 and 5* by Derek Strange (1989)
3. *New Headway English Course* by Liza John Soars (2000a)
8. *Marvin’s Woolly Mammoth* by Jill Eggleton(n.d.)

B. Procedure

The aim of the current research was the analysis of frequency of the DMs and kinds of the DMs in IHSETs. All of the reading sections in IHSETs were analyzed to distinguish kinds of the DMs and more than 50% of the reading sections were investigated to show the frequencies of DMs. It should be mentioned that the investigation of frequency is not viable unless we compare these reading sections with some texts in authentic texts. In order to analyze the DMs, some criteria were used. The present study benefited from Frasers’ (1999) category of DMs to analyze the reading comprehension sections in IHSETs in terms of using the DMs and familiarizing the students with DMs in the reading comprehension sections.

To determine the number of the DMs in IHSETs, the frequency of DMs used in each reading passage was identified and they were presented in tables. Four tables were prepared to show the DMs contained in the reading sections in each IHSET. Then, to compare the reading sections in IHSETs and the authentic texts properly, it was necessary to determine the readability ratio of each text. Flesch’s Readability Formula was used to determine the difficulty level of the reading passages. In this way, one can see whether the DMs used in IHSETs reading sections are sufficient. To compare the texts, they should be equal regarding the number of words or length of the texts and their level of difficulty.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this study, two questions were put forward regarding the DMs in the English textbooks in high school. To answer the first question, the reading comprehension sections of the textbooks were analyzed regarding the use of the DMs. To make this investigation viable, parallel texts in internationally developed English textbooks were compared with IHSETs in terms of the use of the DMs. The texts in the textbooks in comparison to the texts in internationally developed English textbooks should have been in the same level of readability and length. So, the readability of all the texts in the textbooks and their parallel texts in internationally prepared texts was determined by the use of Flesch’s Readability Formula. Fifty per cent of the texts in the textbooks were selected randomly and were investigated in terms of the use of the DMs.

A. Answering the First Research Question

To answer the first research question—that is, “to what extent are DMs used in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?”—the frequencies of DMs in English Books 1, 2, 3 and 4 were investigated and compared with the DMs in the authentic texts.

1. DMs in English Book 1

There were nine reading comprehension texts in English Book 1, four texts of which were investigated in terms of the use of DMs and were compared to the authentic texts in internationally developed textbooks (see Table 5.1 in Appendix B). The first column includes the titles of reading sections in English Book 1 that were compared to the authentic texts. These two groups of texts had to be equal in the rate of readability and their length. So, the second and third columns indicate the number of words in each reading section and their readability score. The main issue in this table is the number of DMs which are shown in the fifth column. The second half of the table shows the same information for texts of internationally developed books.

Regarding Table 5.1, the number of the DMs in four reading sections of English Book 1 is nine, whereas the number of the DMs in the parallel texts of the authentic textbook is 45. In order to investigate the difference in frequency of the DMs in high school texts and the authentic texts, a chi-square test was run. Table 5.1 shows the results of this test:
As the statistics in Table 5.1 reveals, the chi-square is 24 which is significant at \( p = .000 \). Therefore, the texts in English Book 1 were statistically different from the authentic texts in terms of the number of the DMs used.

2. DMs in English Book 2

The reading comprehension texts of lesson 2, 4, 6, and 7 were selected from seven reading comprehension sections of English Book 2. Parallel texts which were equal in length and readability were found in internationally developed books and these two groups of texts were compared in terms of using the DMs. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 5.2 (see Appendix B). The number of the DMs used in English Book 2 was 25 and the number of the DMs of the authentic texts was 41. Another chi-square test was employed to compare the frequencies of the DMs in both series. Table 5.2 indicates the results of this test:

The statistics in Table 5.2 reveals that the chi-square is 3.879 which is significant at \( p = .049 \). Therefore, the texts in English Book 2 were statistically different from the authentic texts with regard to the number of the DMs used.

3. DMs in English Book 3

English Book 3 includes six reading comprehension texts. Again, four of the reading comprehension sections were selected and the DMs in these texts were compared to the DMs in texts of internationally developed books. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 5.3 (see Appendix B). A third chi-square was used to compare the frequencies of the DMs in the two series. Table 5.3 demonstrates the results of this chi-square test:
Table 5.1 on page 7 shows that the amount of chi-square (9.615) is high enough to indicate that the difference between the frequencies is statistically significant ($p = .000$). Therefore, once again it can be claimed that the texts in English Book 1 were statistically different from the authentic texts regarding the number of the DMs used.

4. DMs in English Book 4

English Book 4 contains eight lessons and each lesson has one reading text except Lesson 8 which has two reading texts. So, this book includes nine reading texts. Although this book has used authentic texts for reading comprehension sections, in order to determine the number of the DMs in this book, six texts were selected and compared to the texts from internationally developed books which were equal in the length and readability. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 5.4 (see Appendix B). In order to compare the frequencies, one last chi-square was implemented. Table 5.4 shows the results:

By examining Table 5.4, one can understand the amount of chi-square (1.136) is only significant at $p = .286$ which is not an acceptable amount to claim that the two series are different in the number of the DMs used.

B. Answering the Second Research Question

To answer the second question—that is, “What kinds of DMs are used more in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?”—the DMs in all the reading comprehension texts were studied. All the DMs used in the English textbooks were classified in accordance to Fraser’s category of DMs.

1. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 1

In order to investigate different kinds of the DMs in English Book 1, the reading comprehension texts of English Book 1 were studied. Table 5 (see Appendix B) shows all the DMs used in English Book 1. As it is shown in Table 5, of the various kinds of ‘contrastive markers’ category, only but was used and of different kinds of ‘elaborative markers’ category, only and was used. But ‘inferential markers’ included more varieties. The most frequent kind of DM category was ‘contrastive markers’ in English Book 1, and there was no ‘topic change marker’. Interestingly, the reading text in Lesson 9 included no DMs at all.

2. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 2

All seven reading comprehension sections of English Book 2 were investigated in terms of different kinds of the DMs. There were 52 DMs in English Book 2 (see Table 5.5 in Appendix B). There were 19 buts from the category of ‘contrastive markers.’ Like English Book 1, other kinds of ‘contrastive markers’ were not included in the text, but ‘inferential markers’ and ‘elaborative markers’ included more varieties. There was no ‘topic change marker,’ the same as English Book 1, whereas the most frequent kind of the DMs was ‘elaborative markers’ in English Book 2.

3. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 3

The reading comprehension texts in English Book 3 were studied in terms of the use of the DMs. There were 35 DMs in this book (see Table 5.7 in Appendix B). There were 13 ‘elaborative markers’ used in English Book 3 which was the most frequent kind of the DMs in English Book 3 and ‘contrastive markers’ were the second most frequent kind of the DMs.
DMs in this book. In this book, however was added to the category of ‘contrastive markers’ which was absent in the two previous books. Again, ‘topic change markers’ were not included.

4. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 4

There were authentic texts in English Book 4. Although long texts were presented to the students, these texts include different frequency of the DMs from English Books 1, 2, and 3. Various kinds of DMs were used in English Book 4 (see Table 5.8 in Appendix B). It was a big change in the case of DMs between three previous books and English Book 4. This book, unlike the three previous books, included ‘topic change markers.’ The most frequent DMs used in English Book 4 were ‘elaborative markers,’ and then ‘contrastive markers.’ The least frequent DMs, however, were ‘topic change markers.’

According to the analysis of the DMs in these books, the DMs in English Book 4 were used in a logical manner in comparison to the DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3. So, to show what kinds of DMs were used more, two separate tables were prepared. The first table (Table 5.5) represents the kinds and percentage of the DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3 and the second table (Table 5.6) shows the kinds of the DMs used in English Book 4 (see Appendix B). Figure 5.1 shows the percentages of the DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3, and Figure 5.2 illustrates the percentages of the DMs in English Book 4:

**Table 5.5. The Most and the Least Frequent DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of DMs &amp; percentages</th>
<th>Contrastive</th>
<th>Elaborative</th>
<th>Inferential</th>
<th>Topic Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book 2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number &amp; Percentage</td>
<td>38.21%</td>
<td>34.95%</td>
<td>26.82%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 5.1. DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3](image)

In ‘contrastive markers’ but was the most frequent kind of the DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3, there were 46 buts. There were 16, 19, and 11 buts in English Books 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The second frequent DMs used were 28 ands from ‘elaborative markers.’ There were 8, 14, and 6 ands in English Books 1, 2, and 3, respectively. In ‘inferential categories,’ the most frequent DMs was 12 sos. There were 4, 7, and 1 sos in English Books 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Totally, there were 47 (or 38.21%) ‘contrastive markers,’ 43 (or 34.95%) ‘elaborative markers,’ 33 (or 26.82%) ‘inferential markers,’ and ‘topic change markers’ were totally ignored in these books. At the end, it can be concluded that the most frequent kinds of DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3 is ‘contrastive markers’ (38.21%) and the least one is ‘topic change markers’ (0%).

**Table 5.6. The Most and the Least Frequent DMs in English Books 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of DMs &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Contrastive</th>
<th>Elaborative</th>
<th>Inferential</th>
<th>Topic Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book 4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.83%</td>
<td>45.94%</td>
<td>14.86%</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to this Table 5.6, ‘elaborative markers’ (45.94%) were the most frequent kinds of DMs in English Book 4 and after ‘elaborative markers’ were ‘contrastive markers’ (37.83%). Although ‘topic change markers’ are not totally ignored in comparison to English Books 1, 2, and 3, it is not used sufficiently (1.35%).

VI. DISCUSSION

Regarding the importance of DMs in reading comprehension, the findings of this study revealed that the frequencies of the DMs in the reading comprehension sections in IHSETs are not sufficient. It means that the learners comprehend the texts better when the texts included enough number of DMs. DMs in a text increase the coherence of a text. Larson (1987) believes that “the determination of coherence is fundamentally an interpretation by a reader. It is part of a transaction between text and reader–between the readers’ world and the writers’ language” (pp. 66-72). In addition, when students are acquainted with different kinds of DMs, they are able to recognize the basic structure of a text, so it enhances their comprehension of a text. For instance, if a sentence includes because or so, readers can realize that it is a cause-effect sentence. Dymock (2005) thinks one of students’ problems in comprehending the texts is that they are not aware of the basic structures of a text. Expository texts come in a variety of patterns like description, sequence, compare-contrast, cause-effect, and problem solution.

Eslami-Rasekh and Eslami-Rasekh (2007) investigated DMs in a study in three academic lectures. They found out that DMs are important because they help readers and listeners understand the text better. They revealed in their results that DMs facilitate the process of listening comprehension.

The findings of the present study revealed that DMs are not used sufficiently in reading comprehension texts in English Books 1, 2, and 3 in comparison to the texts in internationally developed books. But the DMs in the reading comprehension texts in English Book 4 in Iranian high schools are taken into consideration and are used sufficiently. According to the results of this study, the structure of English Book 4 is different from the structure of English Books 1, 2, and 3.

Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) have also studied occurrence of different learning objectives in exercises and tasks of the textbooks based on Bloom’s (1965) taxonomy in English books. Bloom’s taxonomy includes six levels of educational objectives: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. They have classified these objectives into “lower” and “higher” order cognitive skills in their study.

This investigation showed that lower order components were dominant in English books in high school. ‘Application’ was the most frequent taxonomy in English Books 1, 2, and 3 and ‘evaluation taxonomy’ was totally absent in English Books 1, 2, and 3. But ‘evaluation taxonomy’ was considered in English Book 4, and again attention to lower order cognitive skills were more than higher order objectives. Finally, it is important to note that “lower order” taxonomies were more frequent than “higher order” cognitive skills.

By improving the materials, authors can aid students to go beyond the lower level taxonomies and move to higher order taxonomies. In the knowledge stage–the first level–students just remember the information or recall them, or then, in comprehension, students understand the facts by translating, giving description, interpreting and giving main ideas. In the last level, ‘evaluation,’ students are able to make judgments about information and ideas. According to teachers’ ideas, DMs have not received enough attention in English Books 1, 2 and 3, but explanations in English Book 4 are provided to some extent and frequencies of the DMs in the texts are sufficient. Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) believe that students in grade 4 consider the texts and the topic as a whole and their comprehension is higher in comparison with students who study the reading texts of English Books 1, 2, and 3. It was mentioned earlier that DMs help readers to comprehend the texts, but authors of the IHSETBs were not aware of this influence, so they omitted the DMs to simplify the texts, and it produced the opposite results.

Some of the teachers thought the DMs were used in English Book 4 more frequently than in English Books 1, 2, and 3 because the main focus in English Book 4 is reading comprehension. But according to Dahmarde (2009), English Books 1, 2, and 3 have also focused on reading comprehension. Reading comprehension has a big part in these three
English books but there is little attention on teaching strategies of reading. Based on high school English teachers’ opinions, students tried to learn and memorize the meaning of the new vocabulary or structural points in the process of reading. Students’ reading skill does not improve in high school and they do not read to make meaning of the text. They are not taught to focus on meaning or they are not told not to translate the texts. Interestingly, students thought the important points in comprehending the texts were new vocabulary and structural points.

When students in grade 4 were asked about comprehension of the texts, they answered that although the texts are longer than the texts in English Books 1, 2, and 3, they are more interesting and they could comprehend the texts better. They also said that they are not able to guess the meaning of the texts. Although many kinds of DMs are presented to students in English Book 4, they consider them as structural rules. They are not told that these markers help them to make a relationship between different sentences. If they were aware of the influence of DMs, they would be able to consider the sentences as a whole and focus on meaning instead of focusing on separate items of vocabulary. They realized that the way of reading changed completely from readings in the three previous books, but they did not know why they comprehend the text better, and even they did not know better comprehension of the texts is the result of DMs which make the text coherent.

The results also showed that ‘contrastive markers’ are the most frequent kinds of DMs used in English Books 1, 2 and 3. These three books include 38.21% ‘contrastive markers,’ 34.95% ‘elaborative markers,’ 26.82% ‘inferential markers’ of the total DMs, and ‘topic change markers’ are not used at all. English Book 4 considered DMs as an important topic, so it was studied separately regarding the kinds of DMs used. ‘Elaborative markers’ are used more than other three categories of DMs. This book includes 37.83% ‘contrastive markers,’ 45.94% ‘elaborative markers,’ 14.86% ‘inferential markers,’ and just 1.35% ‘topic change markers.’

VII. CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, the reading comprehension sections of high school English Books 1, 2, and 3 in Iran do not include sufficient number of DMs, but the reading comprehension texts in English Book 4 have enough number of DMs. In addition, in terms of the kinds of DMs used in English books, the findings of this study demonstrated that the most frequent kinds of DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3 are ‘contrastive markers,’ whereas ‘topic change markers’ are not included. In English Book 4, however, the most frequent kind of DMs is ‘elaborative markers’ and the least one is ‘topic change markers.’ In the case of teachers’ ideas about the DMs in English books, the present study showed that the teachers had the same ideas as the results of the study. They believed that the number of the DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3 are not sufficient. But the number of the DMs in English Book 4 was enough. They also added that the DMs in the reading sections help students to comprehend the text better. The students thought they understand the texts better in English Book 4, but they did not know that DMs increase this comprehension. By representing shortages of the DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3, it is hoped that the findings will encourage the authors of textbooks to consider the use of DMs in the process of reading comprehension as an important factor in reading skill.

APPENDIX A  THE FLESH’S (1948) READING EASE READABILITY FORMULA

The specific mathematical formula is:

\[
\text{RE} = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW})
\]

\[
\text{RE} = \text{Readability Ease}
\]

\[
\text{ASL} = \text{Average Sentence Length} \quad (\text{i.e., the number of words divided by the number of sentences})
\]

\[
\text{ASW} = \text{Average number of syllables per word} \quad (\text{i.e., the number of syllables divided by the number of words}).
\]

Flesch (1948) (as cited in Crossley, 2011)

APPENDIX B
### TABLE 5.1.
**Comparison of DMs in English Book 1 and the Authentic Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook 1, Lessons:</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
<th>Authentic Books</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Funny Farmhand (2)</td>
<td>69.419</td>
<td>130 and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductory Steps to Understanding</td>
<td>89.788</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>so, and, but, too, but, and, and</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn a Foreign Language (5)</td>
<td>83.582</td>
<td>204 because, but,</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Racing Driver (Head Way)</td>
<td>83.18</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>so, because, then, and, so, then, because, but, but, and, because</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boy Who Made Steam Work (6)</td>
<td>94.481</td>
<td>324 but, but, and, and, and</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Looking After Sarah (Start Reading 4)</td>
<td>91.745</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>and, but, and, then, and, but, and, but, so, again, but, again, and, again, so, too, then, but, again</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Holy Prophet (9)</td>
<td>79.683</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>The New Mozart (Head Way)</td>
<td>81.826</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>but, and, but, but, and, too, and, so</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5.2.
**Comparison of DMs in English Book 2 and the Authentic Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 2, Lesson</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
<th>Authentic Books</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charls Dikens and the Little Children (4)</td>
<td>93.362</td>
<td>263 so, and, but, and</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Taffy’s Trousers</td>
<td>93.314</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>too, but, and, but, but, and, and, and</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hic Hic Hic (6)</td>
<td>41.715</td>
<td>223 and, then, or, or, or, but, but, and, but</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Lady Who Lives on Plan</td>
<td>49.422</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>because, so, but, then, also, and, and, but, because, and</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Are You (7)</td>
<td>80.381</td>
<td>444 but, but, but, but, but, so, so, yet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Empty Chair</td>
<td>72.111</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>well, and, then, because, well, and, but, and, and, and, and, but, because, because,</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Other Side of the Moon (2)</td>
<td>95.588</td>
<td>216 but, but, but, but, so</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Marvin’s Wooly Mammoth</td>
<td>93.708</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>then, so, then, but, but, and, and, still, and,</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5.3.
**Comparison of DMs in English Book 3 and the Authentic Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 3 Lesson</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
<th>Authentic Books</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV or no TV (1)</td>
<td>93.177</td>
<td>351 then, but, and</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The King of the Fish</td>
<td>97.313</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>too, but, and, and, and, and, and, then, but, so, then, but</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory (3)</td>
<td>70.277</td>
<td>263 yet, but, thus, but, again</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trading Space</td>
<td>73.677</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>and, however, but, so, but, but, so, but, even though</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Olympic Games (4)</td>
<td>61.317</td>
<td>244 and, because of</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Tale of Horribly Good Bertha</td>
<td>75.165</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>And, and, so, and, and, and, and, and, because, and, but</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Word IS a Puzzle (5)</td>
<td>87.898</td>
<td>410 but, and, then, but, so, but, because, and, but, but</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kiamaus Paper Bag</td>
<td>89.158</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>and, too, but, too, and, and, then, and, and, then, and, and</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Lesson:</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
<th>Authentic Books</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
<th>DMs</th>
<th>Number of DMs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to Give a Good Speech (2)</td>
<td>72.312</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>and, then, also, and, but, and, but,</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>How to Give a Good Speech</td>
<td>79.975</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>so, again, and, and, then, and, and, then, but, too, and</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Exploration (6)</td>
<td>62.808</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>then, also, also, although, and</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>What You Don’t Know about Exercise</td>
<td>63.276</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>but, too, and, but, and, and, however, that means, but</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Teresa (8)</td>
<td>54.548</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>and, although, still, and</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ordering Aspirin is Truly a Wonder Drug</td>
<td>54.966</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>although, and, also, but, and, but</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Edison (8)</td>
<td>55.337</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>besides, and, although, instead</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Crime of the Month</td>
<td>57.603</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>and, moreover, also, on the other hand, also, but</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Warming, Global Concern (3)</td>
<td>75.029</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>but, and, and, because, and, but, but, but, in some cases, but, with this in mind</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Earth’s Spreading Desert</td>
<td>69.231</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>however, and, and, and, still, but, but,</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquakes and How to Survive Them (4)</td>
<td>54.893</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>in comparison to, but, though, so, but, but, and, so, but,</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Living a Long Life</td>
<td>80.273</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>and, by comparison, but, too, well, also, therefore</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 54 books, 141 lessons, 49 DMs

### Table 5.5

#### Different Types of DMs in English Book 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 1 Lessons</th>
<th>Contrastive Markers</th>
<th>Elaborative Markers</th>
<th>Inferential Markers</th>
<th>Topic Change Markers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>so, so</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>but, but, but</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>because, therefore, then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>then, then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>but, but, but</td>
<td>and, and, and</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>and, and, and, and,</td>
<td>so, then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 8</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>so, then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16 but</td>
<td>8 and</td>
<td>4 so, 2 because, 1 therefore, 5 then</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.6

#### Different Types of DMs in English Book 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 2 Lessons</th>
<th>Contrastive Markers</th>
<th>Elaborative Markers</th>
<th>Inferential Markers</th>
<th>Topic Change Markers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>and, and, too, and</td>
<td>then, then, so</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>and, and, and, and,</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>but, but, but</td>
<td>and, and, and, and,</td>
<td>and, too, also, again</td>
<td>then, so, so</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>but, but, but</td>
<td>and, or, or, or, and</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>yet</td>
<td>So, so</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19 but</td>
<td>14 and, 3 or, 2 too, 1 also, 1 yet, 1 again</td>
<td>7 so, 4 then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.7

#### Different Types of DMs in English Book 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 3 Lesson</th>
<th>Contrastive Markers</th>
<th>Elaborative Markers</th>
<th>Inferential Markers</th>
<th>Topic Change Markers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>but, but, however</td>
<td>in other words, or, and, and</td>
<td>because of</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>but, but</td>
<td>yet, again</td>
<td>thus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>and</td>
<td></td>
<td>because of</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>and, and, and, and,</td>
<td>and, again, because of</td>
<td>then, so, because</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>in addition to, also, also</td>
<td>because, This means, furthermore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11 but, 1 however</td>
<td>1 in other words, 1 again, 1 or, 6 and, 1 yet, 1 in addition to, 2 also, 2 because of, 2 then, 1 thus, 1 so, 2 because, 1 this means, 1 furthermore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2011 ACADEMY PUBLISHER
TABLE 5.8
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DMs IN ENGLISH BOOK 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book 4 Lessons</th>
<th>Contrastive Markers</th>
<th>Elaborative Markers</th>
<th>Inferential Markers</th>
<th>Topic Markers</th>
<th>Change Markers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>and, and, and, also, means, in addition, in addition, and, in other words, too, because, because, so</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>but, but</td>
<td>also, and, and, and</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>but, but, but, but</td>
<td>and, and</td>
<td>in some cases, because</td>
<td>with this in mind</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>in comparison to, to, though, but, but</td>
<td>and,</td>
<td>so, so</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>but, but, on the other hand</td>
<td>also, also, also, and, also</td>
<td>because, in many cases</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>although</td>
<td>also, and, also, and</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>however, although, but</td>
<td>also, and, and, also, and</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson (Reading 1) 8</td>
<td>although, still</td>
<td>and, and</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson (Reading 2) 8</td>
<td>although, instead, besides, and</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18 but, 5 (although, 1 on the other hand, 1 however, 1 in comparison, 1 instead, 1 still</td>
<td>18 and, 10 also, 1 besides, 1 in other words, 1 means, 2 in addition, 1 too</td>
<td>3 so, 4 because, 2 then, 2 in cases</td>
<td>1 with this in mind</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES


Mohammad Reza Talebinejad is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Islamic Azad University, Shahreza Branch. He is also an associate faculty member at Sheikhbahae University, Iran. Dr Talebinejad received his BA in English Language and Literature, University of Isfahan in 1975. He then got his MA in TEFL from the University of Texas at Austin, USA in 1977. For his doctoral degree, Dr Talebinejad was admitted to the University of Sheffield, UK, where he did his PhD in Applied Linguistics in 1994.

He has widely published in Iranian as well as International professional journals such as Metaphor and Symbol, English Teaching Forum, Language Testing, IJAI, Language and Translation, Journal of Social Sciences, The International Journal of Humanities, and other local and international journals. Dr Talebinejad has presented papers in International conferences such as AILA, 2000; Atiner, 2011; RAAM, 2002, 2001 in Paris and Tunis, EUROSLA, Switzerland, 2006; Multicultural Conference, 2007, China. In addition, Dr Talebinejad has authored/coauthored eight books in related fields and ESP.

Azam Namdar graduated from Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch with a BA in TEFL in 2007. Ms Namdar is an MA candidate in Graduate School of the Islamic Azad University, Shahreza Branch. She has presented two articles in local and national conferences.